

HOME MISSION LESSON

ISSUED BY THE

WOMEN'S BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY.

2411 Indiana Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Lesson XVII. Japanese in America.

The inhabitants of the "Land of the Rising Sun," for many centuries, were well content to know little of countries or people beyond their own Island Empire. "And when one is contented," muses Cervantes, "there is no more to be desired; and when there is no more to be desired, there is an end of it." It was less than a half-century ago that America opened Japan to the world. Twenty years later, the Emperor sent forth a number of his most intelligent subjects to visit the United States for the purpose of studying her form of government, and observing her advance in civilization: from that time until the present Japanese have found their way to America.

I. What comprises the Empire of Japan?

The Empire of Japan, situated in the Pacific, 420 miles east of China, directly west of California some 5,000 miles, is composed of four large islands and more than two thousand smaller ones. Its length is more than 1,500 miles, extending as it does from Kamchatka in the north to Formosa in the south. The width of the main lands varies from 100 to 200 miles. The entire area, exclusive of Formosa, 146,000 square miles, is just about equal to that of the two Dakotas, while its population at the beginning of the year 1898 numbered 46,558,297. The larger islands are named, respectively, Hondo, Kiushiu, Shikoku, and Yezo. Of these, the first is by far the largest and most important. The capital, Tokyo, the ancient capital, Kyoto, and Osaka, the commercial center, are all situated on this island. It was in the town of Nagasaki, situated on the island of Kiushiu, that the Dutch lived for more than two hundred years. The island of Yezo is in the extreme north. On this island the aborigines of Japan, called Ainu, now live.

II. Mention some of the most important historical events of the Empire.

According to mythical history, the national life of Japan began with the accession of the Emperor Jimmu Tenno, six hundred and sixty years before our era. Jimmu Tenno, who was both high priest and emperor, is said to have civilized the people and established a form of government. For centuries his posterity reigned on the throne which he had founded, bearing the title of Mikado. The Mikado was held and treated like a god, his power being supreme. Not until the twelfth century did this power suffer diminution. In the third century of the Christian era Corea was conquered

by Zingu, the most celebrated Empress of Japan. At this time a free intercourse seems to have been carried on with China. "Learning, religion, philosophy, literature, laws, ethics, medicine, art—all were brought over bodily. From this time forward the Japanese were largely students and imitators of China." Messrs. Astor, Chamberlain, and other reliable historians agree that the first trustworthy date in Japanese history is 461 A. D. The imperial line is probably as old as that of the popes. Japan in authentic history is younger than Christianity. About the middle of the sixth century began the conversion of the nation to Buddhism.

About the middle of the twelfth century the vassal princes took advantage of the weakness of the imperial government to strengthen their own power; rebellion was imminent. In this emergency the court of the Mikado created the office of Shogun, or commander-in-chief, of the army. The power of the Shogun increased, until in the sixteenth century, when, under the title of Tycoon, he assumed absolute control of the empire, the Mikado having been reduced to a nominal monarch. The existence of the Japanese Empire was first made known to Europeans by a Venetian traveler Marco Polo, in his narrative written about 1298.

In 1549 St. Francis Xavier, the celebrated "apostle of the Indies," with his two colleagues, visited Japan. He and his successors reaped within twenty years a harvest of 300,000 souls in the highest and lowest walks of life, and built more than forty churches and monasteries, besides several chapels.

In 1600 and 1609 we find Dutch ships seeking an entrance to the ports of Japan. Before the arrival of the Dutch, who were then at war with Portugal, the Japanese government had become distrustful of the Portuguese. Portugal and Spain were united, and it was to a Spaniard, surely not an apt pupil of the Jesuits, that the emperor of Japan addressed the question: "How is it that your king has managed to possess himself of half the world?" The answer lightly given: "He sends priests to win the people; his troops then are sent to join the native Christians, and the conquest is easy," is said to have precipitated the persecution of the Christians, and sealed the doom of Catholicism in Japan. Not long after an edict was issued by the Emperor for the banishment of the missionaries. A few years later war was declared against all Christians; for several years the persecutions raged, until, in 1641,

all were expelled. "So rigorous was the edict of 1637 that not only were foreigners forbidden to land on the Japanese coast, but the natives were forbidden to leave it." The Dutch, closely watched, were permitted to remain, and for more than two hundred years retained the entire monopoly of the European trade of Japan. The antagonism of the Japanese to Roman Catholics was the main cause of this exclusive policy.

In July of 1853, Commodore Perry, commissioned by the government of the United States to present a letter from President Fillmore to the Japanese Emperor, entered the Bay of Yeddo with his squadron. The presence of foreign ships caused intense excitement among the officials and people. After some delay the letter was received by commissioners of the Shogun, and Perry sailed away, leaving word that he would return the ensuing spring for an answer. In March of 1854 was signed the treaty of peace which opened Japan to America. Europe followed America, and soon a number of Japan's ports were thrown open to various nations.

Opposed to the opening of Japan to foreign influences was the Emperor, in favor of the same was the Shogun; thus came into existence the Imperialist and Shogunate parties. The real issue of this party conflict was "whether Asian tradition or Aryan civilization should triumph."

In 1868 occurred the revolution—the last struggle of the Shogunate for self-preservation, which resulted in the restoration of the Imperial authority. Once again the Mikado became the supreme ruler of the Dai Nippon. Three years later feudalism was abolished.

III. Mention the most important religions of Japan. What advancement has been made by Christianity?

The most ancient, Shintoism, imported from China, consists in the worship of the Sun and the elements. Buddhism, entering Japan six centuries after Christ, greatly modified the Shinto religion. Buddhism is the most popular of the Japanese religions, and has become the religion of the people. Later, from China also, crept in Confucian ideas. "Confucianism inculcated that loyalty to chiefs and that reverence and devotion to parents which formed the keystone of the Japanese social system." The followers of Confucius include the best educated people of Japan. Tenrikyo, or the "Doctrine of the Heavenly Reason," is a religion of more recent origin; it is confined to the lower strata of society, but its disciples already constitute one of the most vigorous and active religious bodies in Japan to-day.

One of the emperors of the sixteenth century wrote: "So long as the Sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan." This hostile feeling against Christianity in general, engendered by the Catholic missionaries of that time, confronted the Protestant missionaries who entered Japan some thirty years ago, and made their work both difficult and dangerous. During the past twenty years Christianity has made rapid progress. Schools and dispensaries have been established, the Bible translated into Japanese, religious book and papers printed, education

is compulsory, and the Christian Sabbath is recognized as a legal holiday.

At present there are more than twenty evangelical organizations represented in Japan. Of these, the largest proportion is from America. The membership of the native Christian church has increased greatly, and in 1903 a remarkable religious awakening occurred, during which large numbers accepted the Christian faith. The work of the missions has in a hundred different ways indirectly influenced the life of the nation.

IV. What can be said of the people of Japan?

The people of Japan belong to the Mongolian division of mankind. "The Japanese male has considered himself all through his history the superior of the graceful and gentle companion of his life, who is taught, from the hour when she disappoints her mother by arriving in this world, to humble herself, first to her parents, next to her husband, and lastly to her children." She is expected to have an agreeable manner and cheerful face under all circumstances. "Whatever her lot in life, it is her duty to please and to win, by her amiability and gentleness, a place in the affections of those above her." Marriage, as we know it, can scarcely be said to exist for Japanese women. An elaborate ceremony is observed among the upper classes, a very simple one among the lower; but so far as the man is concerned, it is a union dependent only on his good pleasure. "He can and does divorce his wife on any of seven grounds, among which are 'disobedience,' 'talking too much,' and 'jealousy.'" The statistics of 1888 show that one marriage out of every three in Japan ends in divorce.

Japan has been called the "Paradise of Babies." All babies in Japan live in the fold of the *Haori*, tied to the back of their mother, or some older brother or sister. The little girls are treated kindly; they, with the boys, have their yearly festival; but they are at a sad discount compared with boys. A Japanese lad is brought up to endure all things patiently, and to prefer the most bitter death to loss of self-respect. The central characteristic of the Japanese character has been declared to be self-respect.

The Japanese are the greatest lovers of "the tub" in the world, and are undoubtedly the cleanest of all known people. One who frankly confesses to having been charmed by this people writes of their manners: "But where else in the world does there exist such a conspiracy to be agreeable; such a widespread compact to render the difficult affairs of life as smooth and graceful as circumstances admit; such fair decrees of fine behavior fixed and accepted for all; * * * such sincere delight in beautiful artistic things; * * * such tenderness to little children; such reverence for parents and old persons; such widespread refinement of taste and habits; such courtesy to strangers; such willingness to please and be pleased? The eye is not less delighted perpetually in Japan by graceful and varied costumes than the hearing is gratified by those phrases of soft, old-world deference and consideration which

fill the air like plum and cherry blossoms falling. It stands an absolute fact that there is no oath or foul interjectory word in Japanese; he who is evil-mouthed is shunned by all alike and utterly despised."

COMING TO AMERICA.

V. Give a sketch of the first Japanese in America.

The first Japanese to come to America were two fishermen, blown to sea, who reached San Francisco in 1841. Later seventeen unfortunate sailors rescued by American seamen were brought to the same port. One of the most formal of the embassies sent to America by the Shogun was that under the direction of Townsend Harris, which left Japan in 1860.

In 1866 there came to New York the pioneer Japanese students, two in number. In ten years five hundred students had sought aid or advice of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church. Rutgers College was the first to become the favorite resort of the Japanese. Since that time almost all of our colleges, as well as the naval academy at Annapolis, have given instruction to Japanese students, and on not a few have degrees and honors been conferred. According to the statistics, there were in the United States in 1900, 71,386 Japanese men and 14,600 women. Many of the former and a few of the latter were students.

VI. What steps were taken for the elevation of women?

With the new régime in Japan began the elevation of the status of women. Educational institutions were established without number; soon, however, it became evident that the young men, because of their Western education, were advancing more rapidly than the women. In the edict issued by the government in 1871 regarding this matter, we read: "Women, therefore, have had no position socially, because it was considered that they were without understanding; but if educated and intelligent they should have due respect. Five young Japanese women of rank go to America in care of Mrs. De Long, to be sent to some seminary of learning at the expense of the government."

In 1872 the Imperial embassy, consisting of forty-nine members selected from among the most promising of the young statesmen, came to our country. Accompanying this embassy was Hon. Charles E. De Long, United States minister, and Mrs. De Long, in whose care had been placed the five young girls, the eldest of whom was fifteen, the youngest eight years. The embassy remained in the United States more than a year. Two of the young girls studied in Vassar, one graduating with some honor. Miss Tsuda, the youngest, on her graduation from Bryn Mawr, returned to Tokyo, and became a teacher in the school for the girls of the nobility. Miss Koto House, the daughter of a high official, was adopted by an American family, who brought her to this country. She was converted to Christianity, and returned to Japan to establish a large school for girls in Tokyo. She founded the first woman's society in Japan for providing the sick and poor with clothing. Miss House

is now a naturalized citizen of the United States, and since her return has been actively engaged in forwarding schemes for the education and moral elevation of her countrywomen at home.

Since 1885 a number of women have been sent by the government to America for the purpose of pursuing special studies. Miss Kato has been investigating the normal school and kindergarten systems. Miss Okami, who studied medicine in Philadelphia, on her return was placed in charge of the woman's department of the Charity Hospital in Tokyo. Miss Tell Sono has taken a course of law in the Pacific University, California, and it is reported that a Mrs. Tamura came to New York State "to learn the necessary duties of a pastor's wife."

VII. Where do the Japanese who come to America locate?

Comparatively few Japanese are to be found east of the Rocky Mountains. Several hundred are on our warships, and a larger number are students and merchants. Most of those in the East are in New York City and State, but by far the large majority of these people settle on the Pacific Coast. In 1870 eleven Japanese settled in San Francisco, and in 1880 the number had increased to about two hundred. Compulsory conscription laws were published about that time, and at once the wealthy youths wishing to escape army service fled to Europe, while many of the less well-to-do flocked to the Golden Gate. Later, the opening of a large steamship line between Japan and America, with Seattle for a terminal, turned the tide of emigration northward, and the large Japanese populations are now found in California, Oregon, and Washington. They are, with very few exceptions, law-abiding, temperate people, who, on account of their engaging manners and adoption of American customs, have made themselves popular.

VIII. When and where was Christian work begun among them?

In 1886 the Japanese mission, which had its birth in the Chinese mission, became an independent organization. Rev. M. C. Harris, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for eleven years a missionary in Japan, with his devoted wife, took up this work and organized a mission in Oakland and San Francisco. In 1897 Dr. Harris wrote of the prosperous condition of the work and said, "The character and growth of the Christians is encouraging. The most of them abide firm in the belief, and take hold of Bible truth earnestly." He also speaks of a Presbyterian mission among the Japanese.

IX. What work has been done by the Baptist denomination for these people?

In Brooklyn, N. Y., a Japanese Christian Institute was opened, about 1894, as an denominational effort to provide a Christian home for Japanese who came for study or to seek employment. Rev. Mr. Hirose, a Congregational minister in charge, was afterward immersed by Rev. A. C. Dixon, of the Hanson Place Baptist Church, and the church manifested much interest in the work.

A distinctively Baptist mission was opened

in Seattle, Wash., in 1892. At this time three young men came asking for instruction in the English language. A Bible school was immediately organized, and has been carried on without interruption since. There are at present about three thousand Japanese in this city, and until recently but the one mission, the Baptist mission, among them. Mr. T. Okazaki is in charge, under the appointment of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, and the work is growing under his care.

At *Tacoma*, Wash., work has been carried on for some years by the same society, and an organization has been incorporated to establish a "Japanese Baptist Home" to carry on Christian work among the Japanese students. "The self-denying liberality of our Japanese brethren shows the estimate they put on these Christian homes as evangelizing agencies," writes Rev. George Campbell, superintendent of Baptist Missions among Chinese and Japanese on the Pacific Coast.

At *Port Blakeley*, Wash., is the only genuine Japanese village in America. Here several hundred Japanese have settled as employes of the mill company, and by permission of the company have built their homes along the sides of a ravine, a most picturesque arrangement of Japanese houses built by Japanese carpenters. A mission work has been opened among these people, and a chapel has been built and paid for by the native members. Mr. Okazaki and Mr. Hara from Seattle care for this work.

X. What can you say of the need of special work among women?

In writing of the conditions in California one has said, "Many young Japanese women have come to California during the last few years; a few have been known to be tourists and students, some have professed to be domestics and seamstresses, but there is a strong suspicion as to the real vocation of some of these women."

XI. What is being done for the women?

Dr. Harris, writing of the needs of the work said: "This increasing Western population certainly demands our attention, especially do the needs of the little Japanese women, with their pleasing manners and Old World ideas, appeal to us." Not until March, 1904, was one appointed for this specific work, but at that time Mrs. Yoshi Okazaki, wife of the Japanese pastor in Seattle, was commissioned by the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society to give half time to work among the Japanese women and children of that city. She writes: "The number of Japanese women in Seattle is not as large as that of the men, but it is increasing all the time. There are about one hundred respectable Japanese women in the city, besides the one hundred and more living on the dark side where all kinds of vices are practiced. I do the best I can.

"We felt the need of a home where we could receive and temporarily care for Japanese women to give them Christian influence, especially those just coming from Japan. We have about 13 hotels and lodging-houses that are Japanese, but they are not safe places for women. Last summer we had to start it. We spoke to Japanese ladies here and to some American friends, and they gave us about sixty dollars. We rented the house of eight rooms and furnished it. We have already had eighteen women. For some of these we found employment, and for others who came to join friends or their husbands, we helped to find the best way to reach their destinations." This "Christian Home for Japanese Women" has proven a blessing to many.

In July, Mrs. Okazaki wrote of their first Women's Meeting, held at the home of Mrs. L. V. Ward, and reported an attendance of five Japanese women. Of these, three were Christians, one the wife of the Methodist pastor, and the other two were inquirers. They decided to spend some time in studying God's word at each meeting, and then work.

